Military help for Sri Lanka

1571. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received a specific request from the Sri Lankan Government for military help in the second week of October, 2009;

(b) if so, the response of Government to this request;

(c) whether it is a fact that Indian Army went on a high alert after this request; and

(d) the details of this request and Governments' response?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA): (a) No.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Transit journey across Bangladesh

1572. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of development that Government has made in achieving positive results for evolving an agreement between Bangladesh and India on transit journey across Bangladesh;

(b) by when it is likely that the system would come into force; and

(c) the status of mutual discussion in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) to (c) During the visit of Foreign Minister of Bangladesh in September, 2009, both sides discussed issues relating to connectivity. In this context, both sides discussed designating Ashuganj as a new port of call under Article-23 of the Inland Water Transit and Trade Agreement as well as the use of Chittagong port by India. Bangladesh agreed to provide access to Ashuganj Port to facilitate the transportation of the Over Dimensional Consignments for the Palatana Power Project in Tripura.

Haj pilgrims using MP quota

1573. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Haj pilgrims that used the special quota of MPs in the year 2009;

(b) whether there is any discrimination in that quota; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SHASHI THAROOR): (a) A total number of 6014 seats have been allotted to Hon'ble Members of Parliament for Haj 2009. Efforts are made to allocate seats to each Member of Parliament requesting for the

same, provided the recommendations have been received and quota is available at that time. A minimum of two seats per MP is held in reserve for such requests.

(b) No.

(c) Does not arise.

Relevance of NAM

1574. SHRI MOHAMMED ADEEB:
SHRI SABIR ALI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) to what extent NAM is powerful in today's world; and

(b) the steps Government is taking to make it more strong and powerful?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA): (a) The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), with a membership of 118 nations, is the largest group of developing countries. It plays an important role in articulating an independent point of view of developing countries on international issues and as a custodian for South-South cooperation.

(b) India, as one of the founders of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), remains strongly committed to the principles and objectives guiding NAM. On its part, India remains strongly committed to the principles of the NAM and contributes actively to its deliberations, including at the Summit level.

Resuming dialogue with Pakistan

†1575. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Minister of State for External Affairs insisted on resuming the dialogue between India and Pakistan;

(b) if not, whether it has also been stated that the will of Kashmiri people would be taken care of during the dialogue;

(c) if so, whether it is indicative of seeking referendum; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA): (a) No.

(b) to (d) The entire state of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of India. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have freely and on several occasions exercised their democratic rights through numerous representative elections. Under the Simla Agreement, Government is committed to resolving all bilateral issues with Pakistan peacefully through bilateral dialogue.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi